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Drill
For firefighters and employees
of the Carbondale General
Hospital, it was treated as the
real thing.
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City cited
Auditor General Al Benedict
issued a report last week
which cited some city
shortcomings.
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CHIMNEY SWEEP John A. Schuman of Jermy adheres to the old English custom of wearing evening attire while cleaning chimneys and flues in the upper valley. Master Sweeps in old England appeared in top hat and tails, and Schuman does too, admitting it "surprises people, and they enjoy it." Since the new popularity of woodburning stoves, Schuman works part-time at sweeping chimneys, stressing that they should be freed of creosote build-up every three or four months in winter, to prevent chimney fires. (MIRROR photo by Ros-Al)

He makes clean sweep with chimney-high job

By NAN WATERS

John D. Schuman is making a clean sweep in the upper valley, and yet he never ran for office in his life!

If you see a tall, mustachioed young man in top hat, black evening clothes, black tie and soft white shirt perched on your neighbor's rooftop, that's John Schuman, practicing the age-old art of sweeping chimneys. Straight out of Mary Poppins, the young Jermy resident is the owner of Schuman's Chimney Sweep Service, which, with the return popularity of woodburning stoves, has become a profitable venture indeed.

Homeowners who heat with woodburners should have the creosote buildup in their chimneys cleaned every three to four months in winter, Schuman told the MIRROR during an interview this week.

Neglecting to do so can result in chimney fires dangerous to families and property. (Fireplace owners should have their chimneys cleaned at least once a year.)

Improperly maintained

Seventeen to 20 percent of all home fires are chimney fires resulting from improperly maintained chimneys and flues, according to Schuman.

He charges \$40 for a basic cleaning, and extra if the chimney is unusually high, or there are other repairs to be made to it, or to

furnaces or woodburners. Free estimates may be obtained by calling Schuman at 876-1865 ("the end of the Civil War," as he puts it).

And why does this young Valley View Estates part-time supermarket clerk turn up for chimney cleaning jobs in top hat and full dress?

"Because people enjoy it, and it surprises them," Schuman admits. It's an old English custom, that master sweepers, those in charge of the younger boy "sweeps," always wore stove pipe hats and formal black garb. It's also an old British tradition that "a kid blown to you by a chimney sweep is good luck."

Not all of the early chimney cleaning practices were so cute. Schuman dropped off a copy of "Of the London Chimney-Sweepers," published in 1861 by Griffin, Bohn and Company, and written by Henry Mayhew. In the 1840's and 50's in London, Mayhew found boys ... and some girls ... the smaller the better ... used as early as four years of age, for sweeping chimneys.

These were street urchins who "could not be maintained by their parents," and were returned to their families. They were virtually sold into servitude, and forced to climb inside chimneys and flues, often when the

Street urchins

bricks were still warm.

The incidence of cancer, malformed limbs, and severe burns among these misused children was unusually high.

Today's chimney sweep, while still keeping the old British uniform customs, is nevertheless equipped with flexible fiberglass rods that snap together, and brushes from five to 12 inches, both round and square, to efficiently clean the flues.

Schuman cleans from the top of the chimney down, and a heavy duty vacuum cleaner disposes of soot.

John Schuman, who was reared on a farm 15 miles north of Carbondale, remembers his family leaving the farmhouse with wood. Looking around for a job to supplement his nighttime job as a clerk at Acme Supermarket in Carbondale, he decided to get into the chimney cleaning business.

Own boss

"You're your own boss ... every job is different ... no repetition ... and it's not monotonous."

His father is still a carpenter and farmer, and his grandfather Schuman, at 91, still owns a farm near Honesdale and does his own gardening.

John lives with his wife, the former Darlene Buckbee and their 7-year-old daughter, Joel in the up valley, and is a frustrated free lance writer of poetry and short stories.

Baby's skeleton found; 25-year-old mystery?

By PETE SMITH
and NAN WATERS

"I can't believe it," were the words of a Sand Street resident who expressed disbelief over the finding of remains of an infant at a vacant home at 27 Havana St., Carbondale, Thursday morning.

Those remains, Police Chief John F. Burke later told the Carbondale Mirror, were found by the new owner of the house, Arlene Sorak, R.D., Nicholson, as she was working on the remodeling of the house.

Chief Burke said that the remains were part of an infant — the skull, several arm bones, and ribs. They were wrapped in sheets and rags and put in a cardboard box.

In the ceiling

Chief Burke said the box was discovered

in the ceiling between the second floor and the attic.

The remains were taken to police headquarters and were later sent to Scranton State Hospital where Lackawanna County Coroner William Swercy conducted an examination.

The results of that examination showed that the baby may have been stillborn or died soon after birth, although Carbondale police have not ruled out the possibility of abortion. Swercy also reported that the remains may be as old as 25 years. Swercy ruled out any trauma as the cause of the infant's death.

Meanwhile, as far as The MIRROR could ascertain, the last known residents of the home were members of a family named Quinn. And it was the neighbor who expressed disbelief at the findings who char-

acterized the Quinn family as the type of neighbors who "didn't bother anybody."

Very religious

The neighbor, who asked not to be identified, said that Mrs. Quinn was strict with her family and she was a very religious person.

"They were very down-to-earth people, quiet, and they minded their own business. Terrific people who always went to church."

"They never bothered anybody."

The neighbor stressed she had known them for 40 years, and that they had lived at the Havana Street address for "quite a few years."

She added they had two daughters and two or three sons, but reiterated, "I just cannot believe this. I just cannot. They were such very nice religious people."

Prices on turkeys drop as trimming costs rise

Hey, Mr. Turkey.

Your Thanksgiving bird this year is a whopping big bargain, according to a survey of area grocers and supermarkets, by as much as 40 cents less than last year.

But ... and here's the big but ... most of the trimming to accompany it will cost you at least as much as last year, and maybe even more.

But then again it depends on where you shop, and whether or not the store is having a special Thanksgiving week sale.

Whether you choose a frozen or fresh bird matters, too ... with the latter costing 20 to 40 cents a pound more than the frozen.

Prevailing prices

The prevailing price of frozen gobblers ... house brands ... is 59 to 65 cents a pound. One locally owned store charges 65 cents under 18 pounds, and 58 cents 18 pounds and over. Brand names, such as Butterball,

Wilcox's and Armour's can cost as much as 95 to 99 cents a pound.

Last year, frozen turkeys (house brands) sold at Thanksgiving time for 99 cents a pound.

Fresh-killed turkeys, which are making big inroads on the frozen market, grocers tell us, cost 30 to 40 cents a pound more than the frozen.

"More shoppers are leaning toward fresh-killed birds," several grocers told the MIRROR, "but the cost keeps them away."

Several food merchants told us that fresh-killed were far superior to frozen birds. Others said there was no appreciable difference.

Others told us there was a vast difference between their generic, or house brand birds, and the "brand name" turkeys.

Others said, "They all taste the same, and I think they all come from the same place!" Or ... if gobblers aren't for you ... capon,

fresh-killed, are a delicacy at \$1.49 a pound.

Other goodies

The other goodies on your Thanksgiving table may cost you more than last year. Fresh cranberries in one small town store in the upvalley are selling for 49 cents a pound and in another locally owned store, 68 cents for 12 ounces.

One local store manager told the MIRROR grapes that were 59 cents a pound in 1980, are 99 cents this year.

An up-valley food store told us that turnips, that used to be 10 cents a pound, are now 28. Sweet potatoes used to be five pounds for a dollar. Now they're three pounds for a dollar. Celery in the same store, regularly 69 to 79 cents a bunch, was on sale this week for 59.

Be thankful, at least ... your turkey is down some 40 cents a pound.



FIFTH GRADE STUDENTS of Mr. James Burke, Roosevelt School, Carbondale, arrange canned goods for donation to needy families for Thanksgiving. From left are Chris Kilgallon, Amy Monk, and Jennifer Gribble. (MIRROR photo by Ros-Al)

From the staff
of the Carbondale Mirror
Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving!